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Editor: R. Palme Dutt

★

Geneva and the People

discussed by Nora Jeffery; and Joan Maynard, J.P. writes
STRONG VOICES FOR PEACE must be heard now

★

Crisis, Coal and Oil

R. Page Arnot gives the deadly facts

Other Articles include

'TOO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE'
by Gerry Pocock

TIBET AND NEHRU
by Alan Winnington

▼

THE RIGHT TO WORK DEFENDED, E. Frow;
PIT CLOSURES, J. B. Craig; **FIGHT BACK,** P. Kerrigan;
THE WAGE RISE THAT WASN'T, D. Bowman;

JUNE · 1959

One Shilling and Sixpence

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SPRINGTIME

THIS IS A SPRINGTIME we shall remember as we look back upon it from the world blazing with colour and human achievement which we shall have built. It will seem brief, remote, hard-to-believe, with sharpest contrasts of dreams and nightmares, of acute danger and of decisive opportunity. We shall recognise it as a moment when the peoples of the world had illimitable power within their very hand—and yet some hesitated to close their fist upon it. A spring when millions upon millions had the self-same desire for peace—and yet you could hear intelligent men and women say: 'But what can *one* person do? You can't do a thing to stop Them.' A time of marvels of science and technology, when medical science could make unheard of advances. Yet, when a child was ailing, a mother must brush from her mind the thought; can this be a new radiation sickness, man-made? A nightmare spring, when even 'the gentle rain from Heaven' could fall polluted. Above all, it is a spring on which we cannot afford to look back . . . *with bitterness*

For chances missed,
For wasted years,
The rust of pity,
The slough of tears.

For those who today are still bewildered and hesitant, their troubled doubts will be as hard to recall then as a nightmare at noon. The contrast of these vexed 'fifties is, I think, nowhere more clearly expressed than in the words of the statesmen of two leading countries. Describing it as 'an age of storm and stress,' the first told the British people: 'The fearful question confronts us: have our problems got beyond our control? Undoubtedly we are passing through a phase when this may be so.' That is the nightmare voice of a dying class. The second statesman told the millions of neighbouring India: 'Friends, we live with you in happy times. This is the springtime of mankind, when colonial slavery is crumbling and there is no going back to the past'. There speaks the voice of the class today making the dreams of Socialists in every time and country a reality. Seventy years ago William Morris wrote of Bismarck and his like: 'To make the world not only a prison, but an utterly hopeless prison, is the great ambition of these tyrants'. The sick men of the 'Western World', whose fingers have yet to be prised loose from their H-bomb 'deterrent', have a similar ambition; but they threaten to make prison and open country alike one vast ash-heap.

Why, we shall then ask ourselves, did some peoples hesitate to disarm the sick madmen? I think we shall realise that against the people there was in operation a 'deterrent' more powerful than the H-bomb. This was the terrible Lie Drug, inducing disbelief in the people's own overwhelming strength, distrust of their fellows. Millions are spent on it; it is administered over the air, through the press, from the pulpit, in schools and universities, even in the arts on screen, stage and canvas. It acts powerfully in the people's own organisations through servile leaders who have lost confidence in their own class, or those who have fallen victim to blind prejudice in red-baiting and witch-hunting, or those who cling to narrow sectional policies. How then to speed the process of creating resistance to the Lie Drug? How to find the sure antidote of forging unity and consciousness of the overwhelming strength only waiting to be organised? Significant of the strong currents run-

(Continued on page iii of cover)

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

1. *Propaganda Fall-out*

LAST month, immediately after the May-day demonstrations of the international working class to end war, there were being printed in the newspapers and relayed over the wireless items of information combined with items of propaganda about the continuance and development of weapons of war. On one morning, for example, it was reported from Omaha, the headquarters of the United States Strategic Air Force, that the U.S.A. had allotted a number of hydrogen bombs for the use of the Royal Air Force, and it was stated that 'the bombs are stored under United States guard in Britain and can be released only on a coded signal from the White House'.

Just before the merry month of May began, Prime Minister Macmillan announced that the amount of the bone-rotting Strontium 90 had been doubled, but that he saw no cause for alarm. It was further announced amid the junketings in London that the Shah of Persia would seek to have a commercial treaty with Britain, having already concluded with America the military agreement which makes his country a cold war salient pushed up against the frontiers of the Soviet Union.

All this was the pattern of

CONTENTS

Vol. XLI JUNE · 1959

	Page
NOTES OF THE MONTH: 1. *Propaganda Fall-out;* 2. *Crisis, Coal and Oil,* by R. Page Arnot ...	241
GENEVA AND THE PEOPLE, by Nora Jeffery	255
STRONG VOICES FOR PEACE, by Joan Maynard, J.P.	259
WE FIGHT PIT CLOSURES, by J. B. Craig	262
DRAWING: LIVERPOOL STRIKE, 1911	264-265
THE RIGHT TO WORK DEFENDED, by Edmund Frow	267
THE WAGE RISE THAT WASN'T, by Dave Bowman	270
FIGHT BACK, by Peter Kerrigan ...	273
TIBET AND PREMIER NEHRU, by Alan Winnington	277
EVERY INCH A FIGHTER!	280
'TOO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE', by Gerry Pocock	281
YOUTH AND SKILL, by 'Tyneside Apprentice'	284
Book Review:	
World Without War, J. D. Bernal: *Dr. E. H. S. Burhop* ...	287

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daily and weekly news and daily and weekly views assailing millions of ears and millions of eyes in Britain today. How soon will these ears be stopped and these eyes be shut if this pattern of events works out to its logical conclusion in world war?

Hurtling towards catastrophe

Is it possible to stop this headlong process towards the elaboration and perfecting of deadlier and deadlier weapons before somewhere, somehow, somewhen the first of these bombs be dropped? What strength as yet is in the gathering of the forces of peace and what is the effect of their protest compared to the terrible forces that are hurtling towards catastrophe? That catastrophe might begin anywhere. It might be in Persia—in which case the Lord Mayor's banquet to the Shah would be the prelude, as the shot fired by Principe in Serajevo forty-five years ago this month of June was the prelude to the first world war. Yet there is at least one hopeful sign. The torrent of war propaganda, though in itself a great danger, is at the same time a sign that those who are preparing war are by no means sure that they have the backing of the peoples of their countries. The sinister feature forty-five years ago (as it now seems looking back upon it) was the absence of any official war propaganda while the deadly preparations went on in a strict secrecy, so strict that only a small minority of the Cabinet itself had been told that Britain was committed in advance to engage in war along with France. This time—and the phrase 'this time' now covers a dozen years of protracted anxiety—this time the pattern of daily and weekly propaganda is brinkmanship, designed to familiarise people with the danger until the final fatal step will seem to be such a little one that there is no need to recoil from it; and to accustom the minds of men and women—aye and children too—to the notion of bombs dropping as somehow inevitable.

On the Eve of Geneva

It is hardly an accident that the torrent of war preparation facts and war propaganda should have been intensified when the Geneva Four Power talks over nuclear weapon inspection were facing an apparent deadlock, and just before the opening on May 11 of the pre-Summit talks of the Foreign Ministers. Whatever takes place at these talks and as a result of them, whatever British government shiftings there may be to get out of the locked iron vice to which Adenauer has been given the key by Washington, it is clear that

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this summer we shall once more approach a climax both in the race towards war and in the greater effort to prevent it before it is too late, and in the first case to ban the thermo-nuclear bombs. It was a step in advance when Aneurin Bevan made his declaration on behalf of any future Labour government, confirmed by Hugh Gaitskell on May 1 in Hyde Park, that they would stop all atom bomb tests immediately; but it was a declaration for the future. It did not declare their present policy, their attitude to the Soviet proposals for the Geneva Conference. Therefore there is much more to be done, many more steps to be taken. The goal to be aimed at and the effort required to reach it, as is shown in the article by Nora Jeffery in this issue, are both of great magnitude.

In the Grip of NATO

Seventy years ago this summer the Socialist International Conference in Paris launched annual May-day demonstrations for shorter hours, for disarmament and against war: ten years since the formation of NATO for rearmament and the preparation for a third world war. It was particularly shameless on the part of Monsieur Spaak, the secretary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, to propose that this Treaty of death to the populations of Europe should be celebrated by a special hymn to be chanted by children on one day in the year.* But the proposal may have awakened in some minds a revulsion at the prospect of a ghastly alternative offered by this Belgian 'Socialist' leader of either war or until war, indefinite piling up of armament upon armament, thermo-nuclear weapon upon thermo-nuclear weapon. For armed alliance in war preparation has been the sole content of NATO, as was shown in Sancho Panza's analysis in this magazine a year ago. If such a revulsion of feeling were to become widespread enough inside the Labour Party to demand withdrawal from this dangerous

*May God who rules o'er earth and sky
Cleanse our fair world from fear
Let freedom's banner rise on high
And violence disappear.

Build up the power of right
Bid all the free unite
Let Nato grow in might
And put its foes to flight.

No more shall evil tyrannise
By words or threats or drum
Instead will spread across the skies
The shape of peace to come.

The words of the hymn are quoted by their author, Mr. Godray Lias, in a letter reproaching the *Manchester Guardian* for commenting on the hymn without publishing it. The Editor remarked in answer that the reason was that 'we were given only conditional permission by the director of the British Atlantic Committee, the condition being that comment on the hymn should be "only constructive criticism" '.

Manchester Guardian, April 24, 1959.

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war alliance, it would be a great step forward. It would of course mean a complete recovery of liberty of action by the British state and the ending of a situation where American troops of occupation hold aerodromes and tracts of British soil and there keep guard against British eyes upon the foul explosive weapons they have stored in this country.

The Labour Party and NATO

Ten years of NATO (and the lesser period of its subordinate pacts, SEATO and Baghdad) should bring not a hymn of praise but a sobering reflection that the stationing of an American army in this country is likely to make easier the sort of United States interference in British politics which the Leader of the Labour Party protested against in his Hyde Park speech on May Day. Until, however, the step is taken that breaks with the U.S.A. and gets rid of United States troops in Britain, until the leaders of the Labour Party are freed from subscribing to NATO they will be unable to represent effectively the nation-wide and world-wide yearning for peace. Moreover, this does not affect only the issues of war and peace, but domestic policy as well, for it is impossible to be part and parcel of the armed array of the capitalist world against the countries of socialism and at the same time to move effectively towards socialism inside Britain.

The Transatlantic Bond

Let no one imagine that it would be easy for this country to shake loose from the transatlantic fetters. The great monopolistic capitalist enterprises of the United States usually summed up and symbolised in the Wall Street stock market, are fairly confident that Britain in the grip of NATO is also in the grip of the U.S.A. Of course it is true there is an underlying Anglo-American antagonism reflecting those conflicting commercial interests.* But whether acutely manifest or latent, this antagonism in these last ten years has taken on a shape in which, apart from petulant remarks by politicians and Field Marshals, the British have been on the defensive while the other side has been on the offensive. Since the famous affair of the Chief Joseph Dam in which the successful British tender was finally rejected (its American rivals claiming successfully that it was against U.S. 'security') British capitalists had reason to complain that they have received, in one thing after

*The emergence of this antagonism as a major factor in world politics was first made clear in the Notes of the Month thirty-seven years ago.

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another, a raw deal from their close allies and senior partners. Within the last few months it has been bicycles, then in the late spring woollen goods, and finally at the beginning of May the spiking of the B.O.A.C.'s plan for a transpacific air route.

U.S. Tariff Tantrums

But though the presidents of Chambers of Commerce or of Associations of Manufacturers may complain inside Britain and may ask that the matter should be raised through the Foreign Office, nevertheless they get no respite from the tariff tantrums of the U.S. monopolies which, incidentally, treat with even greater contempt the trade efforts of Australia on the one hand, and Malaya on the other. It may go as far as the Foreign Office, but the British capitalists (or at any rate those leading firms not as yet infiltrated with U.S. capital) can make their complaint in vain. Nor is it likely that this country can easily cease to be a satellite of the U.S.A. when the leaders of its major party and prime ministers have almost all the time been those who boast that one of their parents was a United States citizen. So there is no push to get rid of the U.S. forces let alone the fact that the U.S. does not desire to withdraw them. In the years 1940-41 considerable appeals were made from this country to the United States to join in the war against fascism. Huge demonstrations of refusal were the answer at that time. Scores of thousands marched not only by Yankee Stadium in New York City, but in the other great cities, wearing buttons inscribed 'the Yanks ain't coming'. Today the words that would be on any buttons worn by G.I.s in the British aerodromes would run 'the Yanks ain't going'. It was an easy job for this country to become a U.S. satellite when Ernest Bevin was Foreign Secretary. To cease to be a satellite is more difficult.

Compulsory Greek and Latin

In the month of May Oxford University was discussing in Convocation the question of whether Latin should continue to be compulsory as a condition of entrance. In the old days it used to be customary to point with pride to a long succession of British Cabinet Ministers whose minds had been trained by the study of Latin and Greek; and that many lessons of statesmanship could be learned from a close study of the deeds of the Romans and the Greeks. Very well! Let us refer to a page from classical Greek history that has a certain relevance to the problems of the working class of Britain today.

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COD and NATO

It is the story of the Confederacy of Delos. This was the military and naval alliance built up by the maritime state of Athens in preparation against a prospective enemy. As time went on and year by year passed by the smaller and less powerful independent states and islands that adjoined this alliance found themselves becoming satellites of the biggest power. This Confederacy of Delos, or COD, had some resemblance to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation or NATO. The time of trial came when one of the satellites wished and actually tried to leave the Confederacy. The vengeance wreaked by the Athenians was terrible and as swift as the vengeance wreaked by Dulles on Guatemala five years ago. When the British people bestir themselves to get rid of United States ascendency and to assert the independence of this country they will then learn to what extent they are in bonds that are hard to break—even though they are only dollar bonds and made of paper.

2. *Crisis, Coal and Oil*

Meantime amid the junketing in Britain's capital city and the massacres and murders in Britain's colonies there are throughout the country half a million registered unemployed, a figure which with the hidden factors such as the number of women withdrawn from work, has to be nearly doubled to show the total drop in employment. This unemployment, capitalism's recurring failure to find work for so many of the people, this slump recession crisis which began two years ago in the U.S.A. (where there are still something like five million unemployed in spite of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's trumpetings) has hit Britain hard and has hit the primary producers in the British empire and commonwealth very hard indeed. It has brought, and is bringing, poverty and misery to hundreds of thousands of homes. It has brought disaster to the industries of coal and textiles, once Britain's staple exports; but it has brought joy to those organs of city opinion who for five years now have been arguing in favour of a measure of unemployment which would prevent 'the workers getting out of hand'. The *Economist* was almost the first to come out fiercely against what was called 'over-full employment' or 'brimful employment'. It was a good many months later before the cautious organ of imperialism, *The Times*, judged it wise to take up the same theme. Thereafter all the rest followed.

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Visions of Trade Unions Tamed

The Tory government, whose Chancellor of the Exchequer late in 1954 had proclaimed a doubling of the standard of living in Britain in twenty-five years, within twelve months was by its credit squeeze creating the desired unemployment, a process much hastened by the catastrophic raising of the bank rate to 7 per cent in the autumn of 1957. Officially the Tory politicians deplored the rise in unemployment which they had helped to create. But the organs of city opinion were unashamedly gleeful and began to have visions of trade unions tamed, shop stewards repudiated, militancy broken and profits soaring ever higher. But the unemployment though very 'salutary' to economy must not go too far so as to imperil the dividends. Now because of a slight fluctuation in the unemployment totals the city merchants are cock-a-hoop and feel that all is well in the best of all possible worlds. But there are still half a million unemployed, a drop of nearly a million in employment, with the basic industries and the export trades of Britain contracting and diminishing and shrinking. Capitalism in the past generations brought Britain to the fore as a manufacturing and trading country. Capitalism today is holding Britain back while other countries blessed with an advanced socialist form of public ownership are forging ahead.

Destroying Productive Capacity

At the meeting of the Productivity Council last month Macmillan uttered his hopes for increased production following upon his Chancellor's Budget. Two days later in the House of Commons the government revealed its plan for cotton textiles to cut down and destroy productive capacity—for which purpose they, who could afford nothing for the old age pensioners, are prepared to spend £30,000,000. 'Fetters on production'—quoth Karl Marx! What clearer example could be given? But the contrast makes it even clearer. If the working classes of the countries of socialism have been able to increase production enormously (and particularly in coal and cotton) by having no capitalist class, then the lesson is plain. The working class of Britain can also solve the problems of production, if they get rid of the fetters. When the conditions of particular industries are examined together with the past and present cabinet policies towards those industries, not only is the general effect of capitalist control shown up, but the special effect of the profit-making motive on the outlook of the rulers is

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exposed. Thus, in the case of coal (a twelvemonth of collieries closed down, and miners thrown out of work) the National Union of Mineworkers correctly placed the blame on the Tory government. Just over three months ago the delegates to the Special Conference of the National Union of Mineworkers passed a resolution in which it was said

> Conference therefore reaffirms its condemnation of the present Government's economic policy, which has created unemployment and a fall in industrial production and activity. (February 27, 1959.)

Thus they *reaffirmed* a condemnation: for it was over ten months since they had first held a Special Conference to deal with the sudden catastrophic fall in coal consumption and the threat to close down pits.

A Parliamentary Debate

This condemnation at any rate, if not the whole of the demands of the mineworkers, was further voiced in the House of Commons debates this year, one on February 6, and one on May 4. In this last month's parliamentary debate, at the end of which the Tory government had a majority of 310 to 231 for the Opposition, the opener for the Labour Party (whose strength is that as ex-Minister for Fuel and Power he knows something of the problems involved and whose weakness, in common with all ex-ministers, is that he may not raise the question of lessening the debt-burden on coal), laid stress on 'the panic way' in which the industry had been contracted and on what seemed under favour to oil as a competitor with coal. He asked for a National Fuel Policy. To this the government spokesman, the pert Paymaster-General Maudling, replied:

> Our aim must be a cheap and abundant supply of fuel. Our policy is to obtain it by proper freedom of choice for the user and competition between suppliers.

The Paymaster-General then alleged that the Labour Party by a National Fuel Policy meant only one thing, to protect 'deep-mined coal against its competitors' which he treated as ludicrous—though the Government protects British agricultural produce against its competitors.

Rivalry of Oil

The facts are of course well known about the rival sources of energy and that coal, for centuries the most abundant and the most

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important source of energy, is now no longer supreme. The alternatives developed this century have been:

(1) Hydro-electric power, a small rival and likely to remain so;
(2) Atomic or nuclear energy, a small rival as yet, but growing, and
(3) Oil, a big rival and rapidly growing bigger.

It is a hundred years since mechanical drilling in Pennsylvania first brought up rock oil or petroleum, then mainly used as lamp oil. At the beginning of this century oil began to advance rapidly, at first with the use of the lighter fractions as petrol in the internal combustion engine. Fifty years ago the navy burned Welsh steam coal and all ships save a few waifs from the age of sail had their bunkers crammed with coal, coastal and ocean-going ships had it in their holds as cargo or ballast, and the coal that left the ports of Britain for abroad was nearly one-third of total production. This proportion still held good in 1913, the zenith year of coal production in Britain when output reached its peak of 287,000,000 tons. Today with a greater population Britain uses far more energy per head; but apart from the rival sources the amount of energy required from coal in the old uses is proportionately less. A ton of steel, a ton of pig iron requires nothing like the amount of coal that was needed fifty years ago.

Displacements of Coal

All these changes including the growth of rival sources of energy have been operating over more than two generations which have witnessed the displacement of coal or coal derivatives in a number of ways, first by light oils and then by heavy oils. But all this process of gradual displacement in one or another aspect of the main source of energy by new sources of energy could be recorded, its curve or increase estimated and the necessary policies worked out. What could not be foreseen or predicted exactly was the decision of the Tory government (a year after Chancellor of the Exchequer Butler had promised a doubling of the standard of living) to impose a credit squeeze and to intensify this up to the point where it could create more and more unemployment.

A National Fuel Policy

Nor is the question of a National Fuel Policy a new and spurious demand as the Tory minister suggested, but a consistent policy of the mining trade unions. It was the demand of the mineworkers

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over a quarter of a century ago in the pamphlet *A Plea for a National Fuel Policy*. Ebby Edwards, for a dozen years general secretary of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain and for seven years thereafter a member of the National Coal Board, drew attention to the fuel difficulties of Britain and set out the demands of the miners' unions. Edwards was able then to show that world production of oil had more than doubled every ten years:

World Production of Oil

Year	Tons
1880	400,000
1890	10,000,000
1900	20,000,000
1910	44,000,000
1920	95,000,000
1930	195,000,000

Since then, as is well known, the pace has been maintained and between 1947 when the world production was 415,000,000 tons output had risen in ten years to 900,000,000 tons in 1957.

A Long-Term Tendency

At the time when Ebby Edwards wrote his pamphlet this matter was discussed as a long-term tendency. It was being discussed when there was already a measure of recovery from the great world economic crisis of 1929-33. It was as part of a long-term policy that the following resolution was carried a quarter of a century ago:

> The Miners' Federation of Great Britain views with great concern the increasing use of imported oil and petrol to the displacement of British coal; we urge our members, and especially the Miners' Members of Parliament, to use every effort to increase the use of coal as against the importation of foreign oil and petrol, not only as a means to the greater use of raw coal, but, in addition, to assist the development of processes to produce oil and petrol from British coal.

That long-term tendency is still operating, but relatively little has come of improvement in the processes to make out of British coal products in liquid or gaseous form that could be piped to wherever required—though much more would have been forthcoming and could still be forthcoming if something like the war-time expenditure of skilled and scientific man-hours were devoted without stint to solving all the technical problems of cheaper hydrogenation and other methods. But today the situation in the coalfields, closing of collieries, is not primarily due to this long-term tendency, but to

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the trade crisis, to the crisis in capitalist production accentuated by the policy of the Tory government.

A New Fetishism of Commodities

The main new development in the struggle is that there is a new use of magic words in parliament and there is a whole vocabulary of such words being worked out. First of all oil, coal and uranium are presented simply as so many commodities. Oil is presented as fighting coal. This effectively obscures the fact that it is the oil trusts who are fighting to get increased profits from oil and who are utterly ruthless and unscrupulous in the means to this end. Oil itself has no desires, no passions, no greed; it is the oil companies who are prepared to use every method to force their product, who are prepared to bring every ounce of influence they possess in order to affect government departments, cabinet ministers and legislators generally. There is a struggle against the capitalist class, and of the capitalist class against the working class, and in that struggle the great monopolies and above all the world monopolies are in the forefront. Of these world imperialist monopolies there are few as strong and as ruthless as the oil monopolies.

Three Giant Oil Trusts

Thus the question is not primarily one of technical trends but a social development within capitalism which transforms capitalism. Already fifty years ago three giant oil trusts were developing, namely, Standard Oil Company of the U.S.A., the Royal Dutch/Shell Group and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. The growth of the Standard Oil Trust headed by John D. Rockefeller, then 'the richest man in the world', marked the change from the free market conditions of early capitalism to its opposite, from the competitive system to the monopoly system characteristic of the twentieth century. Their accumulation of capital became enormous. Dividends on their original stock ran almost incredibly high and were reckoned not in hundreds but in thousands per cent per annum in the case to begin with of Standard Oil. The total capital today of the 'Shell' Transport and Trading Company Limited holding two-fifths interest only of the Royal Dutch/Shell Group stands at £730,023,408. The riches of the giant oil trusts were only possible on such a scale as Standard Oil through intense exploitation. Beyond the normal methods of capitalism violence and corruption were used to attain their ends.

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The Corruption of Oil

John D. Rockefeller built up his oil empire by secret rebates from bribed officials of transport concerns which enabled him to exterminate his rivals. The bribery thus begun spread until one unsavoury episode after another led to the Sherman Act in the U.S.A. that broke up Standard Oil Trust into a number of separate companies. But that did not end the scandals. Thirty-five years ago there was the Teapot Dome scandal when Senator Fall, the Republican Home Secretary of the United States, was found guilty of taking bribes on an enormous scale from oil interests and was sent to prison. The oil interests remained free to continue their unsavoury operations to this day. Thus through its violence and corruption oil, meaning the oil magnates, meaning the oil millionaires, have in country after country led in the development of the worst features of capitalism. Today the whole of western Europe as well as the 49 States of the U.S.A. are under its influence.

The Smell of Oil

There is coming to be a smell of oil about the Palace of Westminster and in the many ministries that are called 'Whitehall'. It is an all-pervasive smell; and for one knave who snuffs it up greedily there are ten honest men who have persuaded themselves that they are acting on their own initiative, walking justly and taking an unbiassed view. The ten-year railway electrification was to be carried out largely by coal-fired electricity generating stations; now it is more and more to be diesel-electric. The Gas Council imports from the U.S.A. liquid methane having first linked up with the Comstock International Methane Company. Alfred Robens, calling attention to 'secrecy about the methane experiment', said:

> Plans are in view for the building of four tankers, totalling 32,000 tons, to ship the equivalent of about 13 million tons of coal in the form of liquified methane to these shores. (*Hansard*, May 4, 1959.)

So it goes on, with the approval of the Tory Government. But before this reaches the next balance of payments crisis (oil is now the biggest import, as coal was once the biggest export), some questions may be asked. For example:

> How many ministers were directors of oil companies?
>
> How many shares in oil companies are held by (*a*) cabinet ministers; (*b*) other ministers; (*c*) permanent secretaries (civil servants)?
>
> How many are in British and how many in foreign-owned oil concerns?
>
> How many in companies of associated industries such as automobiles and rubber?

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Oil, said Robens, was coming in 'at bargain prices' because a bar had been put upon it in some European countries; and that in particular Germany had put a turnover tax on imported oil to protect its own coal industry. He added:

> Therefore the refineries on the Continent have been turning to Britain and are dumping oil in this country where there is no restriction. Only one-quarter of the fuel oil being used in industry today is coming from refineries in the United Kingdom. Three-quarters of it is coming from refineries outside, and in the main from continental refineries.
>
> (*Hansard*, May 4, 1959.)

What conclusion does the protectionist Tory Party draw from this? Does it leap to the protection of the nationalised coal industry? On the contrary. The present situation, as one M.P. remarked, is welcomed, in so far as it helps to undermine the status of the mine-worker. A superfluity of oil imports makes mining labour superfluous: whatever is superfluous can be got cheaply enough.

Sauce for the Goose?

For the Annual General Meeting of the Members of the 'Shell' Transport and Trading Company Limited (May 20, 1959) the statement of the Chairman, Lord Godber, drew attention to a 'position of potential oversupply' in 1959 and amongst the 'factors involved' singled out one:

> On March 10, 1959, the President of the United States proclaimed mandatory controls on all oil imports into the United States. For the first time imports of residual fuel oil will thus be included in a control system. The precise effect of these mandatory controls will only become apparent with time, but there is no doubt that the total imports into the United States over the balance of this year will be substantially lower than was previously expected, and this will add to the potential oversupply elsewhere.

To meet this admitted over-production the government of the United States has no hesitation in protecting its 'indigenous fuel' by import control. Any similar step for Britain is ruled out. A year and more ago when the National Union of Mineworkers raised it, the National Coal Board refused to put it to this Macmillan government. A month ago, as we have seen, the Paymaster General scorned any such suggestion. Why? Because of the sacred principles of free trade? Tell that to the horse-marines. The oil interests in the U.S. have one policy and are strong enough to enforce it: the oil interests in Britain have another policy, which

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they also are strong enough to enforce. It goes against any suggestion of a national fuel policy. There is to be no sauce for the U.S. gander: and it is our goose that will be cooked.

The Fight Ahead

It needs a book to deal with all the ramifications of the world-wide oil trusts; their vast, extended and manifold pedigrees, so vast that the Royal Dutch/Shell Group alone comprises nearly half a thousand daughter and grand-daughter companies; their horizontal and vertical integration; their oil-fields, pipe-lines, tanker fleets, refineries; the variety of their products from solids and heavy oils to light oils and gases; the petroleum chemicals and all the other derivatives; their interlocking directorates with other trusts and banks; their governmental connections, so far as these can be ascertained; their economic and strategic influence; and in the end their politics. Here it is has been enough to call attention to their almost forgotten existence, hidden behind solemn discussions and statistics of 'rival commodities'. The mine-workers and all the other workers of Britain should have no illusions about the nature of the fight ahead. As the coal-owners retire from the front of the arena (in some cases, as that of Powell Duffryn, to invest their compensation in the oil industry) new foes arise. For the colliers some of their needs were well voiced at the Doncaster demonstration on May 10 by the Yorkshire area president demanding

> The ending of compensation payments to former colliery owners; the return of the seven-hour day for underground workers and the 40-hour week for surface-men; an immediate substantial cut in opencast working and the endorsement of a national fuel policy that would safeguard the mining industry. (*Daily Worker*, May 11, 1959.)

For all workers, including the miners, the other demands should also be clear.

Ensure peace. Drive back the madmen. Break the United States control. Send the G.I.s home. Win independence for the United Kingdom. Win an independent working-class policy for the Labour movement, which does not belong to a few leaders but to all the working people.

May 11, 1959. R. PAGE ARNOT.

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GENEVA AND THE PEOPLE

Nora Jeffery

WHEN last month the final arrangements were at last made for the Foreign Ministers' conference, the hopes of all the ordinary people of the world centred on Geneva. We all felt that only one outcome was acceptable: this meeting must take the first steps to end the cold war; it should lead quickly to a Summit Conference that would ensure the ending of H-bomb tests, and would begin to solve peacefully the German problem. This is a duty owed to our own children and to the children of tomorrow.

It was itself a great tribute to the feeling and pressure for peace throughout the world that the Foreign Ministers were forced to meet in the first place. There have been talks before. There have been mountains of obstacles before put in the way to prevent them taking place. And talks have been sabotaged before. This the peoples of the world know all too well. In 1955 when talks took place, the peace movement relaxed to await results. We are wiser now; it must not happen this time. There was never greater need than today to put unprecedented pressure on the government for a successful Summit Conference.

The need for this is strikingly illustrated if we retrace the developments of the weeks leading up to the Foreign Ministers' meeting, and note the cross-currents and under-currents which were part of the struggle to reach that stage.

It is some time now since Macmillan put his white hat back in storage, and came home full of optimism from Moscow. And what a change has taken place! He returned impressed with the need to discuss with the Soviet Union on 'some method of limitation of forces and weapons, both conventional and nuclear, in an agreed area of Europe, coupled with an appropriate system of inspection'. And, as was later revealed, he had put forward there a compromise proposal for a limited number of on-site test inspections, as a way to end the dead-lock in the H-bomb test talks. Each of these could be important steps forward in the ending of the cold war.

Then began a series of pilgrimages to the capitals of the West to report on the Moscow visit—March 9, Paris; March 12, Bonn; March 17, Ottawa; and finally March 19, Washington. As the visits progressed two things emerged, rumours of differences among the governments, and a steady watering down of the original British proposals.

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Even before Macmillan could get to Paris and Bonn, Adenauer and de Gaulle held a secret meeting to agree upon a common line of approach. And American papers were busy pouring cold water on Macmillan's ideas. One London correspondent wrote:

> Neither the U.S. nor French diplomats are happy about some of the language in the Macmillan-Khrushchov communique, and the stress it puts on negotiations as such. (*Washington Post*, March 7, 1959.)

(Apparently we should not even think of negotiating to end the cold war.) The New York *Herald Tribune* commented (March 7, 1959) that disengagement in Europe would be 'a difficult selling job' in allied capitals. And so it turned out to be.

But Macmillan started on his round. First Paris; where, we are told, he and de Gaulle were in agreement about common policy and purpose. Yet strangely enough, almost in the same breath, French spokesmen were telling us they were not convinced about an area in Central Europe where arms and troops would be limited and controlled. Later the French Foreign Minister was to speak of disengagement plans as 'a little naive'. One is bound to wonder what was happening to Macmillan's plans for Central Europe.

Then on to Bonn, and here the mystery deepens. Complete agreement again! And simultaneous reports from German sources that Mr. Macmillan agreed with Dr. Adenauer's view, that in any reduction of military forces there should be no priority for atomic weapons. In return for this concession, the Germans would support the thinned zone idea, provided it was linked with political progress on the German question, especially reunification.

By the time the visit to Washington is completed the very idea of disengagement in central Europe has become a plan for 'freezing' forces in a prescribed area. Moreover, Mr. Haggerty, speaking officially for the U.S. Government, was quick to point out that even this was only advanced 'as a suggestion', and 'unfortunately, . . . associated, through false reports, with disengagement'.

No one could be surprised when General Norstad, Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, attacked any form of disengagement in Europe; nor that by the beginning of April the plan is no longer even 'freezing' of forces, but a 'ceiling' to allow of a better disposition of NATO troops if necessary. Thus a Tory paper could say:

> Adenauer's stubborn opposition to British proposals for easing tension in Central Europe has done much to whittle the proposals away.
>
> (*Daily Telegraph*, April 6, 1959.)

When the Foreign Ministers of the Western powers finally met in

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late April to co-ordinate their plans, commentators were agreed that those plans had become a package deal on Germany, little different from the proposals rejected by the Soviet Union at Geneva in 1955.

On the tests a curious situation developed. Once Macmillan returned from Moscow and Washington, the British government joined with the Americans to propose a limitation of atmospheric and underwater tests, leaving high altitude and underground tests to continue. It was left for Khrushchov to reveal the British compromise proposal on limited on-site tests made in Moscow. This has now been taken up by the Soviet Union as a real basis for advance. As for the problem of Berlin the Western powers are apparently agreed to give way on nothing.

This is the story of the past three months' preparatory work by the West for what could well be some of the most important international talks ever held. It is as well to know what we are up against. One could hardly be blamed for seeing deliberate wrecking work in the background, or for believing that the British government has succumbed to pressure from Adenauer, de Gaulle and Dulles. As long as they are committed to NATO, it is hard to see what else they could do. This is the sort of intransigeant attitude, which if unchallenged, would deadlock the conference at the outset.

It is in marked contrast to the spirit with which the Soviet Union is approaching the negotiations. On March 6, Khrushchov stated that the question of fixing a date for settling the future of Berlin was not important, because they had no interest in precipitating matters. Since then he has made it clear that they will discuss other reasonable suggestions, including the maintaining of token forces in West Berlin, and the United Nations to play a part in solving the city's future.

If anything more were needed to spur the whole peace movement into greater activity than ever in the weeks ahead, it is the continuing rearming of Western Germany, and the startling new facts on radio-active fall-out. West Germany's first rocket battalion is in being. Military planes are being built in West Germany under foreign licence; and the West German Government is now demanding the right to establish its own arms industry. Franco-German co-operation to produce nuclear weapons is proceeding fast.

Meanwhile the poisoning of the atmosphere from the tests is worse than we thought. The *News Chronicle* of May 6 reported that radio activity, produced by nuclear tests in the last two years, has exceeded the maximum safe level recommended by scientists

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by at least 75 per cent. We know now too from information released by the U.S. government that Strontium 90 takes only two to four years to fall to earth, instead of seven as previously thought.

On April 29 Macmillan reported in Parliament that since May, 1958, the amount of Strontium 90 falling on Britain had almost doubled, compared with the previous year. Yet with apparent complete indifference to the deep anxiety widely felt, he stood there and said, 'There is nothing that has yet happened that causes anxiety to my advisers in this country'. For parents everywhere the words of Dr. Linus Pauling, famous scientist of America, sound like a knell of warning. He calculates that if tests continue about 100,000 children of the coming generation will die of leukæmia, caused by Strontium 90. All of us ask in the quiet of our hearts, 'Will mine be among that number?'

How deep the anxiety goes, how widespread the desire for peace and the end of the cold war, was shown by the whole-hearted response to Bevan's pledge that a Labour government would end all tests. It is this deep feeling, translated into action, that can guarantee the success of the Foreign Ministers' meeting, and secure a Summit Conference. The Labour Party should be leading the nation, in a great crusade for real peace talks. The response would amaze them.

Now indeed is the time to develop the greatest campaign that Britain has ever seen for successful Summit talks, for the ending of the tests and a German settlement. The feeling is there, widespread among the people. What is more, the Western governments are by no means as united as their package deal suggests. We have a special responsibility to see that the British government is forced into real negotiations. We must refuse to allow the future of our children to be decided by men like Adenauer, who are busy putting atomic arms into the hands of former Nazi generals.

The British Peace Committee is giving all of us the opportunity to bring full pressure on the British government. On June 28 it is calling for a great national march and demonstration in London, asking all organisations and individuals to join in. All who want to see the tests ended and the bomb banned, the rocket sites and bases closed down, who are against the re-arming of Western Germany, who hate the waste of Britain's resources on war preparations, who love their country, must come together on that day to give a mandate and a warning to Macmillan. The cold war must

Continued on page 261.

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STRONG VOICES FOR PEACE

Joan Maynard, J.P.

IT is, I am sure, safe to assume that the majority of people want peace; the thing is, how to get it?

I am confident that it can be achieved by the mass of the ordinary people throughout the world insisting that they will settle for nothing less than peace, that they will not tolerate war and the hell which war brings. Ordinary folk expect the leaders of the world to negotiate for peace, not perpetuate the cold war and build up tension for a hot war.

Like the majority of citizens in Britain, I believe that there can be successful Summit talks if the leaders have the will to make them succeed. I have always found in life that if you really want to do anything enough, you will find a way. How do we, then, the workers, the majority of the world, and in Britain, force our leaders to negotiate? I believe that 'force' is the operative word; because I am sure that the American, West German and French leaders are determined not to negotiate with the Russians for peace. In the past, as Philip Noel-Baker pointed out in his recent book, as soon as the Russians have accepted Western proposals, then the West shifted their ground and put forward a new set of proposals, trying to make sure that they were such that the Russians could not accept.

The Western Powers are so afraid of the forces of socialism and peace that they meet together in order to *try* and draw up a common policy; they then go to a conference, not in order to reduce tension between East and West and so move on to peace, but in order to put forward a set of proposals already agreed on—such as the arming of West Germany with nuclear weapons—which they know the Russians will not accept. We must make it clear that we will not accept that proposal either, as we should not have supported the rearming of Germany with conventional weapons. We must make it clear that we want negotiations for peace not sabotage.

Macmillan with a General Election pending could not but respond in some measure to the growing pressure of the British people for peace: at least he visited the Soviet Union and talked with the Russian leaders. All this I am sure led him to believe—to put it at its lowest—that the Russians are interested in preserving peace. Whether he is strong enough, and whether with his natural class instinct he can withstand the pressure from America and West Germany, is highly unlikely. Unless—and this is where we come in

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—we keep up the pressure on him and other British leaders; and I mean maximum pressure.

How can we do this? The Labour movement, particularly the trade union movement, must lead a great campaign throughout the country for negotiations for peace. The march this year from Aldermaston to London was a great success. That march indicates that the peace movement is growing, but it needs unifying; the Nuclear Disarmament people, the Labour Party, the trade union movement and the Communist Party should join forces in this great battle for peace. For the old adage is true: United we stand, divided we fall. Peace is in the interests of all. We cannot build Socialism or anything else without peace. Therefore let us unite in this common cause and help to win, for all the ordinary people of the world, peace.

The Labour and trade union movement bear a special responsibility because they represent the mass of the working people, who are, though you might not always think so, the majority in this country and in the world. It is therefore their duty to put themselves at the head of this campaign. And I mean campaign: not just one big demonstration in Trafalgar Square, but demonstrations throughout the length and breadth of Britain. Every town and city should have its march and demonstration; petitions should be organised, Members of Parliament lobbied and harassed on this vital issue: Peace and Life, or War and Death. Let us make it plain beyond doubt that we will tolerate no more wars. Leaders cannot go to war without the consent of their people; let us make it clear that we will never again give that consent.

Because we may have had some successes in pushing our leaders towards the Summit Conference, we must not relax; this is no time to sit and stare, as though peace were now inevitable. A break down of talks is always easy enough to engineer if they think they can get away with it. That is why we have to make it plain that they cannot. This, then, is the time to redouble our efforts.

Active campaigning is necessary, with the maximum number of people involved, in the streets, in marches and demonstrations, like the British Peace Committee's demonstration in London, on June 28. But also in local marches, like the one against the rocket base at Selby in my own County of Yorkshire. My own union, the National Union of Agricultural Workers, has already protested against all rocket bases. It is particularly important that the unions should be in the fight for peace, because they are in a particularly strong position to put pressure on the Government. I wish that

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British workers had refused to build the rocket bases, for they are not bases for Britain's defence but for America's defence; it is not possible to defend this small island with fifty million people on it, in an H-bomb war. Any launching of rockets from this island will bring immediate retaliation and annihilation for its people.

It is not true to say that: 'Oh, it doesn't matter what I do. It won't make any difference.' We talk a lot about our democracy; do we really believe in it? Recently here in this area (Thirsk) we had the final instalment of our school cut out of the building programme. We protested loudly and vigorously to everybody in authority. We got a petition up, and hey presto! we got our school back in this year's building programme. So it proves that when people speak with a united voice, the rulers must take notice.

Let us make sure that our voice is strong and clear on the issue of peace. Let us keep up the campaign, and let us make it a united campaign. There are strong powerful forces of privilege and wealth against us, but we are in the majority and together we can and shall win.

GENEVA AND THE PEOPLE—*continued from page 258.*

end. It has been ten years too long. The sabotage of real peace negotiations must stop. We know that the first steps toward peace are perfectly practical; the tests can be ended tomorrow and a start made to ease the German situation. Nothing else will satisfy the people. From now till June 28, let us collect thousands and thousands of signatures, so that the government will have no shadow of excuse for underestimating the country's desire for the success of these talks. And on June 28 itself, if trade unionists, factory workers, co-operators, professional people, peace committees, young people, mothers and children, grandparents march side by side, in their thousands, their voices will be heard, not only in Geneva, but in every capital in the world. The work must go on in this spirit till the sick old men of reaction and war are defeated.

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WE FIGHT PIT CLOSURES

J. B. Craig*

AT the Devon Colliery, Clackmannanshire, over 600 men are faced with the realities of Tory policy. When the National Coal Board announced the closure of 36 pits as a first major step to offset the accumulation of coal stocks, the Devon was the biggest pit listed in Scotland, which they had selected along with South Wales to take the first shock.

Various arguments have been put up about the causes of the decline in coal consumption, including the shift to oil and other forms of energy. Whilst these are contributory factors it is obvious from a glance at the unemployment in the Belgian, West German and French coalfields that the underlying cause is the growing crisis in the capitalist countries and the stagnation and decline in industrial production in Britain under the Tory government. Within this the Coal Board is using the situation in its own interests—not necessarily the same as the public interest—in different areas. Time and again they have stated that they are closing 'uneconomic' pits; but challenged repeatedly by the miners locally and at Scottish level, they refuse to produce the figures to justify their claims.

The whole question of the 'economy' of the industry has been examined before in the pages of *Labour Monthly*. I shall confine myself here to dealing with the Devon pit as an example of what the Coal Board, representing the Tory government, is up to and how we are combating it.

Almost all our workers come from the locality of the pit, many from rebuilt villages and new housing schemes expressly designed to house miners from the Devon and adjacent Meta pits. Large numbers of us, now middle-aged, were uprooted with our families and transferred from Lanarkshire and the Lothians, so-called redundant areas, to Clackmannanshire in the last fifteen years. We had suffered repeated and prolonged unemployment there; but we were assured that with the prospects before the industry we were 'here with jobs for life'. Again, many of us are facing the possibility of a period of further unemployment followed by transfer and the displacement of our families from their jobs; the older men face permanent unemployment. Already from the Meta pit, closed early this year, men have been transferred—following months of

*J. B. Craig, as many of our readers will know, is secretary of the Devon branch of the National Union of Mineworkers.

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uncertainty—to new jobs with substantially lower earnings for many. We are told that employment will be available locally in developing mines; but judging from the facts at our disposal, there appears no real prospect of absorption of anything like 600 men.

There are a number of good reasons to doubt the intentions of the Coal Board.

The Devon is in a position in which if the Coal Board wished to employ the same number of men in coal production, there is still adequate scope for pit development. In fact, for a considerable period areas capable of providing face room have been frozen, allegedly for tapping from the nearby Glenochil mine. Much of the coal available to consumers locally is of poor quality but the Devon produces splint coal, some of the best house-coal in the country. If the pit is closed, that coal is lost to the nation for good.

We are told the pit is uneconomic. But for a considerable time, due to Board policy, the labour force has been about 100 in excess of production requirement—a 'surplus' produced by the restrictive development policy in the pit. These men have been kept, we understand, as a reserve for Glenochil. At this moment there are a number of developers retained as part of this reserve. At pit consultative committee meetings in March and April of this year, it was shown that output per manshift was 31·1 cwts., 30·33 cwts., 30·68 cwts. and 30·21 cwts. in four successive weeks. That is among the higher levels for deep-mined coal output in Scotland. Yet we are told that we are being disposed of as uneconomic! The truth more clearly lies in a recent statement to branch officials by the Area Manager: 'Suppose Devon is in full production and showing a profit, it will close at the end of the year'.

This is why one of our principal demands is for the Labour movement and the Labour Members of Parliament to insist on full consultation with our union before a pit is scheduled for closure. We believe such an examination with all facts revealed would place the Board in an extremely difficult position to justify their steps.

As the whole country knows, the Scottish miners are not taking the Coal Board attacks lying down. A campaign which rallied miners and other workers in thousands to demonstrate, on a scale not seen since the days of the General Strike at meetings addressed by our union leaders in key centres of the coalfield, was the prelude to a special train carrying 600 miners to London to put our demands to the National Union of Mineworkers, the Coal Board, Members of Parliament, and the public.

It won support from other organisations throughout Scotland;

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LIVERPOOL · 1911

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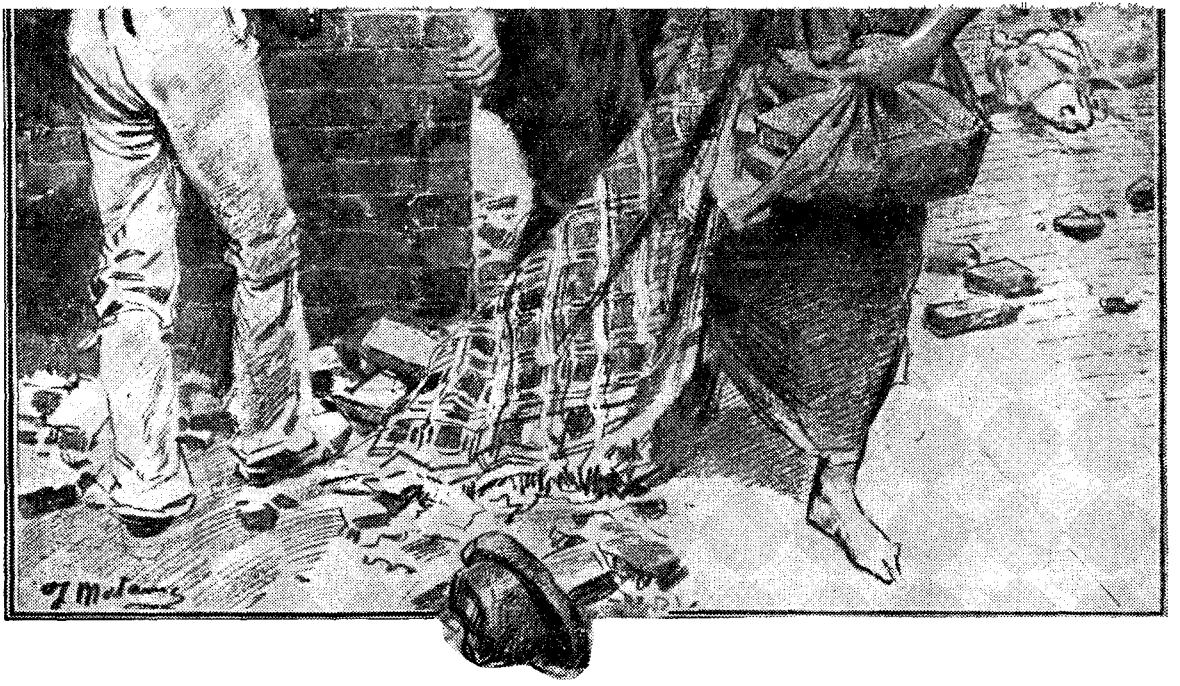

Liverpool battles during the railway goods porters' strike. Police had been drafted in from Birmingham. Picture shows the scene in Christian Street with the strikers gathering ammunition for use against police and soldiers, and was drawn in Liverpool by "The Sphere" artist F. Matania, who witnessed the events.

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and included co-operative societies, such as Muirkirk in Ayrshire and Benhar in Lanarkshire (which donated £100): town councils, such as Whipburn in West Lothian and Lochgelly in Fife; county councils, such as Dumbartonshire, whilst in the same month Lanarkshire and Fife county councils declared their opposition to government policy on pit closures. The feeling aroused may be gauged by the fact that earlier in the year the Scottish Labour Party Conference, which usually follows British Labour Party leadership in decisions, took the initiative of passing an important protest resolution submitted by the Fire Brigades' Union.

In our own locality the officials of all the miners' branches formed a campaign committee to explain our case to the people and to raise funds for the London mass deputation. As a result, 37 street meetings addressed by local union officials—Labour, Communist and non-party in solid unity—took place in the main villages in the area. The response exceeded our expectations. In one small village in one morning over £31 was donated by the people to help to send the strongest possible delegation. The wider implications of the attack were recognised by the local Presbytery who sent one of their members, a minister, to represent them on our march and deputation in London. At the recent Scottish Trades Union Congress our branch sent two representatives to Dunoon, who distributed to all the delegates a leaflet giving our case—an action which received a good response from these men and women representing the entire trade union movement in Scotland. There they were joined by representatives of other sections of the working class movement demonstrating on the question of unemployment. These included delegates from shop stewards' committees such as Remington Rand, Metro Vickers, Rolls Royce, Harland & Wolff, Barr & Stroud, King Aircraft and others. Our branch committee has also met the local M.P. who, after a lengthy discussion, pledged his support to help us in arranging further discussions to advance our fight.

We are in this as miners; but we are also in it as one of the sections of the workers taking the first onslaught of the Tory offensive on jobs. We know we cannot win this struggle ourselves: we need the support of every other section of the labour movement. We believe we can and will get it: that the unity of all the workers, whether shipwrights, engineers, building trades workers or others is the only way to victory, no matter which section is affected at any particular stage. We are confident that this unity is growing and will further grow and strengthen as the struggle develops.

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THE RIGHT TO WORK DEFENDED

Edmund Frow*

TODAY amongst engineers there is a new atmosphere. This has become clearly noticeable in a variety of ways, culminating in the decisions taken by the National Committee (annual conference) of the Amalgamated Engineering Union last month.

Until recently engineering workers have experienced over twenty years full employment. Those under thirty-five years of age have only known full employment and over-time. This situation has now changed. The policy, long advocated by the British Employers Confederation, of creating a pool of unemployed in order that wages could be reduced, is beginning to be achieved.

Against this policy, the trade unions have raised the banner of the 'right to work'. This is the policy of the Amalgamated Engineering Union. Last summer at the 1958 National Committee a plea was made from the platform to accept sackings with compensation for the discharged workers. This policy was unanimously rejected in favour of a policy of full employment, and

> maintaining all workers in their employment until suitable alternative work is found for them and the introduction of a sharing of the work with the guaranteed weekly wage applying.

Then came last year's annual meeting of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions. Here this clear-cut policy of the Confederation's largest constituent body became considerably blurred by being merged with another resolution to produce a hybrid. This created considerable difficulties in several districts. Here are examples from my own, the Manchester district.

At Metropolitan Vickers in Manchester the management, acting with foresight, got a blow in first. A document was circulated to all their workers headed 'Security of employment'. It provided for all those with three years service and over eighteen years to be

> entitled to one extra week's notice of termination of employment for every two years' total service from the age of eighteen.

This, hedged in with restrictions, is the boasted security offered by the employer. It is designed to split and divide the men and to facilitate mass dismissals when necessary.

The shop stewards in the Manchester district had different ideas. They thrashed out a policy that:

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*Edmund Frow, as many of our readers will know, was a delegate to the National Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union.

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1. no overtime be worked by the class of labour where redundancy has occurred;
2. in the event of cessation of overtime not resolving redundancy, a shorter working week of 34 hours under the guaranteed week be adopted;
3. if this policy is supported by the trade unionists in any works, but opposed by the management, we should impose it.

This policy was designed to meet the limited redundancy in the district. Obviously a more far-reaching overall district policy would have been needed to meet a situation where factories were being closed down and mass unemployment the order of the day.

Their views were endorsed by the district committees of the main unions concerned and the Confederation, but met with considerable opposition from the Confederation Executive. The Executive said that each union must decide each case for itself. When men were dismissed, failure to agree should be recorded and the matter taken through the procedure machinery. Such protracted negotiations would only encourage the employers to further dismissals and be cold comfort to the discharged men.

The test came when the men at Lawrence Scott and Electro Motors and at Ferguson Palins were confronted with the issue. Ferguson Palins, it should be noted, is linked with Metro Vickers in the Associated Electrical Industries combine. Despite the opposition of the management, the men put short time working into operation. They were then informed by the press that they were on strike, and by the General Secretary of the Confederation through the same Tory press that they were breaking agreements. In fact, it appears he even went so far as to inform the press that he had had to take Manchester to task recently. These statements were not unnaturally resented in the district and the A.E.U. District Committee registered disapproval in a resolution to head office. The firm stand of the men and the unity at district level quickly brought the employers to offer a favourable settlement. The sequel was shown in the good response by the engineers to the call from the Lancashire and Cheshire Federation of Trades Councils to lobby Members of Parliament on unemployment on April 21.

Similar events having taken place in other districts, it was most appropriate to be the first subject to be debated at the 1959 National Committee of the A.E.U. The delegates from Tyneside moved a resolution which instructed Executive Council immediately to operate the 1958 policy, and went on to say

> it is no comfort to our unemployed members to be told; 1. wait until we get a Labour Government, 2. wait until we get agreement in the Con-

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federation. We therefore instruct the E.C. that help and approval must be given to all who by their actions defend the right to work when such action is approved by the District Committee.

An amendment was moved to provide for an agreement to be reached 'making provision for financial compensation to our members so displaced'. This amendment was rejected by fourteen votes to thirty-eight. The policy as operated in Manchester was also carried in an additional resolution.

The key industrial issue of wages and the 40-hour week followed. On the opening day the President had made what the press described as his 'public declaration of faith' that 'shorter hours should take precedence of wage claims'. This then became the major issue. There had been no sign of the Executive giving leadership to win the 40-hour week. If the National Committee had shelved the wages question, then there could have been a continuation of leisurely negotiations with the employers and an avoidance of struggle. An addendum was therefore moved to the resolution for the 40-hour week 'to give priority to this claim'. A lengthy debate ensued. The outstanding contribution was made by Reg Birch in reply to the discussion. The *Manchester Guardian* commended him on his skilful debating points and commented that his 'generalship was remarkable'. The result was the decisive rejection of the addendum by 20 votes to 32 against. This was followed by the unanimous adoption of a demand for a 15 per cent wage increase. The resolution asked for the claim to be paid retrospectively from the date of application and without any restrictive conditions; in the event of failure to obtain a satisfactory settlement within three months from the date of the claim, the National Committee to be recalled to determine the next step. In the meanwhile, the Executive Council was instructed to launch a vigorous national publicity campaign in support of this claim.

The A.E.U. have thus made clear their determination to go forward for both a wage increase and the 40-hour week.

Judged by past performance the attitude of the engineering employers will be one of bitter opposition. To advance the claim successfully will need the utmost activity at workshop and district level. It will require the same determination, enthusiasm and solidarity, as displayed in the campaign against dismissals. The shop stewards will have to go into action to explain clearly and carefully to the rank and file the justice and validity of our case. A force can thus be created which will refuse to take 'No' from

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the employers as an answer. In their recently published booklet the engineering employers boast, 'Twice in four years the Federation has been prepared to "fight it out" with the unions'. A fitting reply was given by the National Committee in rejecting the employers' statements and instructing the E.C. to 'convey to the engineering employers that in the event of their determining to engage in open conflict, they will meet with the strongest opposition from the trade union movement'.

Thus at a time when the Tory press is giving accurate forecasts of union election results before they are officially known and announcing that moves are afoot for sweeping changes in the democratic constitution of the union, it is significant that a rank and file body is not prepared to be stampeded into a policy of complete class collaboration, but on the contrary takes a stand that can mean a move forward for all engineering workers.

THE WAGE RISE THAT WASN'T

Dave Bowman

TRADE unionists have always known that it is possible for the boss to give money to the workers with one hand and to take it back with the other. Bonus payments are quite a game in this respect. This wages 'conjuring trick' is being played today by British Railways (I make particular reference to the Scottish Region) with astonishing success: a real bare-faced example of how to concede a wage increase and still give the recipients less money.

Last year after repeated efforts to reach a wage settlement, which even included the railway union leaders meeting the Prime Minister, the British Transport Commission conceded as from June 30 a 3 per cent wage increase for all railway workers. The ink was not dry on the agreement paper when there began the biggest 'cut the wages' campaign ever by the 'razor-slashers' on British railways.

Here are living examples of what has happened in Scotland.

Example 1, a signalman class 2. Before the 3 per cent increase, he had a basic rate of £9 1s. 0d. per week. On his three-week working of 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., 2 p.m. to 10 p.m., 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., he had an extra of £2 9s. 6d. for night shift and 8s. for Saturday afternoon. He had a Sunday turn every three weeks which brought

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£2 17s. 0d. His total wages over the three-week period was £32 17s. 6d., or an average weekly wage of £10 19s. 2d. After the 3 per cent was conceded his signal box was closed on Sunday and night shift. He now has a two-week roster 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., 2 p.m. to 10 p.m., and this means a three-weekly loss of £5 6s. 6d. of night shift and Sunday money, or an equivalent weekly loss of £1 15s. 6d. So this signalman got a 5s. 6d. weekly increase under the 3 per cent award and a decrease of £1 15s. 6d.; a total loss of £1 10s. 6d.

Note, not only is there this loss of wages in the signal box for the two men left, but there is also the total loss of the third signalman whose job has now gone.

Example 2, firedroppers at a locomotive depot. Before the 3 per cent increase their basic wage was £7 19s. 0d. weekly. They had a Sunday every third week which brought them £2 10s. 9d. This money and their extra payment for night shift and Saturday afternoon gave them an average weekly pay of £8 15s. 11d. based on the three-week period. After the 3 per cent increase, Sunday working was cancelled. Result: a loss of £2 10s. 9d. every three weeks or 16s. 11d. per week. The 3 per cent increase gave them a weekly rise of 4s. 6d.: so in actual wages they had a decrease of 14s. 5d.

Example 3, a traffic yard. Shunters on the night shift used to work from 10 p.m. on Saturday to 6 a.m. Sunday, giving them an extra payment of £1. After the 3 per cent increase this shift was moved back to start at 12-1 a.m. Monday morning and as a consequence only a 6s. extra payment was made. The 3 per cent increase gave the shunter a wage rise of 5s. 6d. a week, but by the manipulation of hours the increase is turned to 1s. per week.

These individual examples can be applied to thousands of workers in the Scottish Region alone. However, much bigger pickings are being taken by the British Transport Commission in such places as the permanent way, where bonus schemes are based on the principle of two squads doing the work formerly done by three.

Three squads of ten men each: rate per man £7 16s. 0d. Eliminate one squad: a weekly saving of £78. Give the other twenty men a weekly bonus payment of 30s.: total, £30. There is now a weekly saving to the B.T.C. of £48; or, from this simple operation over three lengths of track, a saving of £2,496 per annum. Many such schemes were started in the Scottish Region after the increase.

In July last year the Scottish Region authorities took a decision of 'no recruitment'. This has been strictly carried into effect. The only people recruited to Scottish railways since then are specially skilled staff required because of the modernisation schemes.

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Scarcely one youth has found a position in a Scottish railway depot. Retirals, deaths and ill health vacancies are all covered and swallowed up in 'wastage'; and as a result thousands of wage packets are finding their way back to the coffers of the B.T.C. Little wonder that in 'responsible quarters' in the Scottish Region they boast that the 3 per cent increase is fully overcome and the wage bill is now actually less than before. Are they then satisfied?

In a letter last November to the Minister of Transport, the Chairman of the British Transport Commission, Sir Brian Robertson, said:

> At this time I can go no further than say, we shall take as our target a reduction of £20 million per annum in addition to the economies already in operation which will yield several millions more in 1959 than 1958.

'More' is the operative word and the Scottish Region will go for more economies. More labour for less wages, that is the aim. Discussions are now taking place between the Scottish Region B.T.C. authorities and the railway unions. It certainly is time for the unions to cry 'halt' and mean it.

Tailpiece. Three engine-drivers and myself at the pay window last Friday. First driver's wages less deductions: £9 18s. 2d. Second driver's: £9 17s. 4d. Third driver's: £9 8s. 1d. I was 'top of the league' with £10 10s. 1d. We had all been employed on passenger train working for these wages. No comment.

PAST CONTENTS

APRIL: *Communism and the Left* (R.P.D.); *Macmillan's Visit* (Quæstor); *The Tory Offensive: How to Fight Back:* 1. *'Claymore' Economics on the Railways* (Frank McKenna); 2. *Force Out the Facts on Pit Closures* (George Alsop); *Nyasaland Massacre* (Hugo Rathbone); *The Dance of Freedom* ('Kenya Resident'); *Youth in Engineering* (John Foster); *Shorter Hours and the Crisis* (T. F. McWhinnie); *What Soviet People Read* (Judah Waten). BOOK REVIEWS: *The Brave New World* (Helen and Scott Nearing); *Jim Crow Guide to the U.S.A.* (Stetson Kennedy); *Anglo-Soviet Journal* (S.C.R.); *'Blow You Jack, We Were Right!'* (B.O.A.C. Stewards); *History Unearthed* (Sir Leonard Woolley); William Gallacher, J.W., Peter Tempest, Wal Hannington, R. P. Arnot.

MAY: *Honour to Whom Honour* (R.P.D.); *A Significant Congress* (John Gollan); *The Tibetan Serf-Owners' Rebellion* (Alan Winnington); *Lancashire Fights Back* (Harold Dickinson); *Not Recognised* (Ben Wilson); *Is There a Future in Mining?* (Joe Whelan); *Crisis in Transport* (R. H. Smillie); *Trade Unions Under Fire* (O. H. Parsons); *The Artist's One World* (John Berger). BOOK REVIEW: *People's Capitalism* (J. M. Budish); James Harvey.

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FIGHT BACK

Peter Kerrigan

AT this stage I would like to make some comments on the 'Fight Back' discussion. This is *not* an attempt to reply, but observations arising from reading more than a dozen contributions to a most interesting and instructive subject.

The thing that is very heartening is to get so many positive examples of the determined fight back against the Tory Government and capitalist class offensive. They range from engineering to mining; and cotton to rails. But this reveals one of the basic problems facing the British workers. The struggles lack co-ordination. There does not, as yet, appear to be firm appreciation that sectional battles, no matter how determined, are more difficult to win.

Take the struggle against unemployment in mining, cotton and engineering. The cotton crisis is of long standing, but rapidly worsening, and the Government's latest proposals are designed to accelerate the closure of mills and further contraction of the industry. The mining crisis is of more recent growth. Less than two years ago there was a shortage of coal. The slump and Tory policy have led to present over-production, over-stocking, and closure of pits. Unemployment in engineering is unevenly spread. Government defence policy has faced the aircraft industry with mass pay-offs. Similarly, in the Government ordnance factories and dockyards modifications in military planning has meant the sack for thousands. Ship repair is feeling the effects of laying up hundreds of tramps and tankers.

The spirit is there to combat these sackings. One has only to recall the lobbies of aircraft workers, South Wales miners, Scottish miners, the Lancashire lobby on cotton, engineering and mining to agree. They were all separate efforts, evoking some support from London workers, but in no case receiving mass backing. Here is an obvious case where the co-ordinating force ought to be the General Council of the Trades Union Congress in conjunction with the National Executive of the Labour Party. But they will not lead unless they are forced, any more than will the Co-operative leadership (although Co-operative Societies in some mining valleys in Wales are deep in the red because of pit closures and growing unemployment). Each of the important industrial groups affected, mining, steel, aircraft, rails, docks and so on should be demanding co-ordinated leadership of the overall struggle. Then we will deploy our full strength; and what is more, win the contest.

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Take another aspect of the Fight Back: that is, wages. In rails the National Union of Railwaymen has lodged a claim, but without the backing, so far, of the other two trade unions. In print, despite the separation of the National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants from other unions, there is some co-operation and overwhelming backing for the proposals of the unions' leaderships on how to enforce the claim. The teachers are actively pressing their demand for increased salaries. The building wage claim is slowly grinding its way through the machinery. In engineering, the rank and file National Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union defeated Carron and the Executive Council who attempted to side-track the wages fight by arguing priority for the shorter hours claim. While reaffirming its determination to win the forty hours, the National Committee insisted on sending forward a resolution to the Biennial Conference of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions for an immediate 15 per cent wages advance. Unless, however, the annual conferences and rank and file members of the other unions in the Confederation bring pressure on their respective executives, we could witness at its conference this month evasion of this vital decision of the largest and most important trade union in the industry.

The wages fight is an indispensable part of the fight against the slump, for jobs and to improve our living standards. Again, its success will be ever so much more likely if the General Council of the Trades Union Congress was, in accordance with Congress decisions, to give full support to the efforts of the major unions or groups of unions affiliated to Congress in their efforts to secure wage advances. The same is true if the trade unions in the same industry or in other industries backed wholeheartedly the fight of key sections of workers for wage increases. Here was the fundamental weakness of the London Busmen's strike in 1958.

One of the common features of the articles from miners and railwaymen is their dissatisfaction with the character of nationalisation carried through by the Labour Government and operated under Toryism. Apart from the burden of unwarranted and excessive compensation, these industries, whether mining, rails, electricity or civil air transport, are used as cheap services to the private industries; whilst the Tories do everything to discredit them, and to create an atmosphere of prejudice against nationalisation as a whole. In my view it would be a serious mistake to allow our absolutely justified condemnation of the burden of compensation in these industries and the policies operated by the controlling

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boards to be allowed to discredit the idea of further nationalisation. One has only got to consider the extent and frantic nature of the present propaganda paid for by the steel bosses to appreciate the importance of the fight for further nationalisation. Of course it must be of a different character from the existing set-up.

I am convinced that the greatest strides forward in understanding the inter-related character of the present struggle and the need for co-ordination of the fight will be made in the factory and on the job. Here it seems to me the discussion so far has shown a very good appreciation of its importance and of the shop stewards.

The engineering factory, building job, power station, airport and so on are living examples of the ability of workers to break through trade union, craft and religious barriers and unreservedly co-operate with one another. It also explains the unprecedented attention paid by the Tory Party and its professional advisers to the problem of downing the shop stewards and the trade unions. We should not lightly dismiss the book by Tory lawyers, to which O. H. Parsons refers in *Trade Unions Under Fire.*

The answer it seems to me is to strengthen shop steward organisation everywhere we can; and at the same time to encourage the maximum co-ordination between stewards of different unions, and to greatly intensify the campaign for a hundred per cent trade union organisation on the job. The stronger the unions, the more who are involved, including youth and women, the more difficult for Tory lawyers, Tory government and their friends, capitalist or otherwise, to interfere legally with trade unions or create any more legal discriminations against them as such. One of the first things that would strengthen the trade unions would be an end to all bans operating against Communists holding positions or representing their unions on other bodies. It is a great weakness that a number of them including the largest in Britain, the Transport and General Workers Union, operate these bans. Not only does it weaken their own democratic basis, but also the whole trade union movement.

There also needs to be more effective co-operation between unions in one industry and a revival of the movement for amalgamation. One or two examples are the railway industry, engineering and shipbuilding, print and building.

This leads me to my final point. A General Election cannot be long delayed; but the election should take place under the initiative and drive of the trade union and Labour movement. In other words, all these issues—unemployment, victimisation, wages,

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hours, trade, rents, pensions, nationalisation, the fight for peace and socialism—provide the basis for a developing movement. If it is effectively co-ordinated, it can shatter this Government's policies, and in the election send it crashing to defeat.

Of course, this is easier said than done. I believe it is important in the first place for the active members of the Labour movement to firmly grasp the idea. Then in each sphere the conscious effort should be made to keep the perspective firmly in mind. Not to let ourselves see only our own immediate battle, but also the importance of the war as a whole to defeat the Tory government.

I believe there are bound to be many new ideas and fruitful suggestions on this question, but I do plead for more attention to realising a real united campaign, which will enable something like the full strength of our mighty movement to be mobilised for action.

LABOUR MONTHLY TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

THE RACE TO WAR

The race to war is now in the open. 'We are drifting towards war', announces the Labour Joint Council in its Manifesto of April 25. 'Drift' is hardly the word. All the best brains of every capitalist state, all the strategy, all the diplomacy, all the science and organisation, all the wealth and resources that can be squeezed out of every budget by the starvation of the social services and of any constructive effort, all are being directed with unexampled tension and concentration to the supreme purpose of war. Here, if nowhere else, is planning, *capitalist planning*, the only planning of which capitalism is capable (let the advocates of 'National Planning' mark it well, for their propaganda only serves in practice to help the War Lords)—*planning for war*. The ultimate outcome may not agree with all the neatly docketed plans of all the General Staffs and Foreign Offices and Cabinets; for capitalism remains anarchy; there is no world control. But the planning goes forward in every General Staff, in every Foreign Office spinning its alliances, in every Cabinet room. The material preparations go forward faster and faster with daily and even hourly increasing armaments.

These are hard facts, hard, planned, conscious, material action, not at all unconscious 'drifting'; it is only the official Labour Movement that is '*drifting* towards war'. The sooner the working class faces these facts in a realist spirit, where they are leading, and what must be done, the better.

(From *Notes of the Month*, by R.P.D., June, 1934.)

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TIBET AND PREMIER NEHRU

Alan Winnington

THE abortive rebellion of the Tibetan serf-owners has turned into its opposite. Aimed at perpetuating feudal rule under foreign protection, it has accelerated the ending of feudalism in Tibet and removed the possibility of foreign interference in that region of China.

These things follow inevitably from the defeat of the rebels. Out of the farmland and livestock herds in area under the Dalai Lama Group, about 40 per cent are owned by the Kashag—the rebel local government. The remainder is about equally split between lamaseries and lay aristocracy. All Tibetan serfs, agricultural and pastoral, spend about two-thirds of their working time labouring for the ruling caste, apart from various *corvée* labour. An immediate result of the rebel defeat is that serfs formerly tied to the land and herds of the biggest rebels have been told that in future they themselves will enjoy the fruits of their work on those vast estates. Overnight these serfs have become free and—in Tibetan terms—rich. This will have a tremendous impact as the news spreads.

Those who think that rebel control of the Dalai Lama in India can be used as a bargaining counter to delay reform are deluding themselves. On the contrary, the self-imposed exile of rebels who have delayed reform for the past eight years leaves a social vacuum in which the swift liquidation of feudalism has begun and must spread. Those nobles who are willing to help the wheel of history turn, free their serfs and co-operate in developing Tibet's vast resources for the benefit of all Tibetans, will be adequately compensated for loss of their feudal privileges, as Chinese capitalists have been compensated. The cost of buying out the Tibetan aristocracy will be borne by the central authorities as with serf- and slave-owners in other minority areas I have visited. This is both just and necessary if both serfs and serf-owners are to escape, without destructive class conflict, from the bonds which have held them mutually dependent so long. As leader of the movement for peaceful reform, the Dalai Lama could play a valuable part: his absence will not impede it.

As the facts of the Tibetan situation clarify, it can be seen that some leading Indians, not excluding Prime Minister Nehru, have done a good deal to confuse world opinion, and have lent them-

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selves to what the Calcutta paper *Swadhinata* described as 'a stupendous international deception'. Washington gave notice of its intention to preserve a 'strategic silence' over Tibet while encouraging Asians into anti-Chinese activities. Thus warned, the experienced Nehru could hardly have fallen into their trap; it might rather be said that he walked in. Rarely does a public figure so compromise himself as Nehru did by publicly casting doubts, without a scrap of evidence, on the Chinese Government's report that the Dalai Lama had written three letters appealing for help to get out of the hands of the rebels who were endangering his life. Nehru had to eat his words. While insisting that India must maintain friendship with China and that Tibet was an internal Chinese affair, the Indian Prime Minister still tried to instruct the Chinese how to deal with the situation and also spread the self-contradictory propaganda of the rebels in irascible and superior tones. As the Dalai Lama's three letters showed, as every student of Tibetan affairs believes, the Dalai Lama is powerless in the hands of his top feudal 'advisors', one of whom killed the Dalai's own father. By saying that the Dalai is 'free to go where he likes', Nehru is actually asserting that the young captive is really the leader of the rebellion. If that were so, surely it was most improper for the Indian Prime Minister to arrange such a welcome and pay a personal visit to the leader of a rebellion against a friendly neighbour.

Another example of Nehru wanting to have his cake and eat it was his statement that the Chinese Government had not respected Tibetan autonomy. He unwittingly contradicted himself by also stating that the Khamba revolt had been continuing for three years. But the People's Liberation Army put down the all-out rebellion in a few days; and the Khamba incidents were protracted precisely because the Chinese respected Tibetan autonomy and asked the Kashag (the rebels) to put down the Khamba bandits. The Kashag of course actually used its autonomy to mobilise the Khambas. If there was no respect for autonomy, why were there no reforms in Tibet? When I met the young Dalai Lama in Lhasa in 1955 he told me: 'I have come to the firm conviction that the brilliant prospects for the Chinese people as a whole are also the prospects for the Tibetan people; the path of the entire country is our path and no other'. The following year in India he told Nehru that he favoured reforms in Tibet. In his recent talk he told Nehru the same thing again. Not even the rebels dare force the Dalai into the intransigeant position of publicly denying the need for reforms in Tibet. But still the reforms which freed China's millions and

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gave the land to the tillers, by-passed Tibet. Nehru knows all this; he knows that only a minority even of the Tibetan nobles joined the rebellion; he knows that China exercised the greatest patience trying to win over the Tibetan nobility to policies which would gradually ameliorate the lives of the serfs under one of the most backward savage feudal systems left on earth. He knows, too, how difficult such a policy is.

When he was fighting British imperialism, Nehru said:

> Economic interests shape the political views of groups and classes. Neither reason nor moral considerations over-ride these interests. Individuals may be converted, they may surrender their special privileges, although this is rare enough, but classes and groups do not do so.

That was Nehru writing in a British gaol. Now the leader of capitalist India, his political views are shaped by economic interests too. Nehru exactly mirrors his time: the duality of Indian capitalist interests confronting the aspirations of the mass of the poverty-stricken Indians for a better life. Recently free from British imperialism, desirous of developing their national economy, Indian capitalists are still capitalists in an age of moribund capitalism, still tied by countless bonds to imperialism, still relying on foreign capital. Capitalist India's major interests certainly demand friendship and trade with socialist China, but India's leaders fear the effect on India's peasants and workers of the great leap forward in economy and culture brought by socialism in China.

Nehru tries to convince Asians that the Indian way—'Democratic Socialism'—is better than the Chinese way. He has undertaken no easy task. India needs one million tons of grain extra each year, merely to maintain at its present near-starvation level her population increase. Last year's harvest was seven million tons lower than the previous year, whilst in similar drought conditions China doubled her harvest from one hundred and eighty-five to three hundred and seventy-five million tons. It is no accident that the Indian Foodgrains Enquiry Committee sidestepped the issue of land reform—it was under the Praja 'Socialist', Mehta, now pacesetter in the campaign of vilification of China.

But Nehru has said that India has every desire to maintain friendship with China and that Tibet is China's affair. China has said that her basic interests are the same as India's. Harmony between them can be restored. A democratic modern Tibet will be removed from the cockpit of international intrigue and that will be to everyone's advantage in Asia.

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EVERY INCH A FIGHTER!

What a setback Labour took in the local elections. But let's face it, not surprising with people so fed up with an official Labour policy almost indistinguishable from that of the Tories.

A railwayman commented on the results, 'If the Tories get back in the general election they'll have the skin off our backs'. Too true and some vigorous, furious action is called for now to rouse the working class movement to force a change in policy and sweep these Tories from office.

How to do it? Make a start by using Labour Monthly. *Ours is no journal for a nice, quiet, comforting read. It is, every inch of it, a fighting, campaigning weapon. The way to fight back and the unity which Peter Kerrigan says is needed for success are to be found in our pages. Labour man Bob Smillie (May* L.M.*) and Communist Dave Bowman put their views on rail problems and policy. Labour J.P. Joan Maynard and Communist Nora Jeffery give facts, arguments and policy to help peace fighters win others to take part in the movement.*

Acting to stop the closure of the Devon pit and the destruction of a community, Clackmannan county committee, representing all shades of opinion of Scottish miners, have ordered 96 June L.M.s *to help them carry forward their struggle for life.*

The best and most alert men and women from all communities March for Life on June 28 in London. Many will be there because Labour Monthly *articles have won them to act for peace.*

Here, then, is our magazine helping to draw workers together in discussion and action, here are the signs of getting together to win that new policy and common action that will hand back such a walloping to the Tories as will knock them out of power for good.

We ask for new efforts to sell Labour Monthly. *Particularly we call for volunteers to sell on Sunday, June 28, in London and on the coaches and trains coming from all parts of the land. Fill in the form on the back page of the cover (or phone us at Finchley 5135) saying that you will help that day.*

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'TOO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE'

Gerry Pocock

NEXT month we shall see no less than 402,000 fifteen year old schoolboys and schoolgirls suddenly transformed into 'Juvenile Labour seeking employment'. Who can say how long they will have to wait for work—any work, to say nothing of skilled work? They will be joining the *registered* unemployed under eighteen years of age, the total of which when last month the April figures were announced was 36,000, an increase of 8,000 over March; some 9,470 were without work for over eight weeks.

Behind the announcement of this increase in the number of under-eighteen year olds out of work lies the reality that in Britain today few young people can be guaranteed decent jobs. Unemployed school-leavers have become an accepted feature, a 'seasonal' phenomenon that cannot be avoided. Capitalism is wrecking the lives and hopes of young people today. 'There's too many of them' is the cry, just as a couple of years ago we were told that we had 'too many' old people.

Capitalism stands condemned because it can offer youth no future—in an age when nuclear energy, automation and electronics open up the most wonderful prospects. It is for the organised Labour movement to take up the cudgels beside them in the fight for jobs. In doing so two things are accomplished: firstly, we give hope to those unemployed at this moment; and secondly, we will be insuring Britain's future which will rest on a highly skilled working people.

You cannot discuss youth employment without also discussing trade training, apprenticeship opportunities, and education. The fight for jobs is the fight for skilled jobs. However, let us first look at the immediate prospects of youth employment. In addition to the effects of slump and general unemployment, making work hard to find, there are more young people than ever coming on to the labour market, and the annual total will continue rising till 1962 when the 'bulge' reaches its peak. The average number of fifteen year olds in each year since the war was 640,000: last year this total was 712,000; this year it will be 776,000. It will drop slightly next year before reaching its peak in 1962 with 929,000. That is an increase of 50 per cent in just six years.

In some parts of the country the position will be drastic. Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, for instance, estimate that at least

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10,000 extra jobs, possibly 20,000, will be needed by 1962. Where will these come from at the present rate of progress, in an area which has had persistent unemployment for many years? Scotland and South Wales are also places where the problem will become—indeed, is already—acute. In the new towns, too, a really frightening position is developing: here there is a higher proportion of young people alongside more limited opportunities for work due to the particular development of the New Towns.

On wages, also, even if the lad or girl gets a job, the present position is scandalous. John Foster in his article *Youth in Engineering* quoted figures for engineering apprentices. The National Association of Boys Clubs in a survey conducted last year said that the average take-home pay for boys between fifteen and nineteen years was £3 18s. 7d. Little wonder that Liverpool last year, with one of the worst employment positions and with a high proportion of unskilled labour, took the prize as the top recruiting town for the Army. Little wonder that the Tories can do away with conscription in one form in the hope that they will replace it by another.

It is essential for the Labour movement to take up the fight for jobs for school-leavers, as part of the general fight for work. A major part of this fight must be centred on the provision of trade training and apprenticeships. It is a fact that Britain, one of the leading industrial nations of the world, through all the period of the post-war boom, was only allowing a minority of its young people any sort of trade training. Since the war something like three out of ten boys and eight out of a hundred girls have got a job with training of one sort or another: for the rest, dead end or semi-skilled jobs. Yet this position is getting worse. Just to maintain the proportion of young people getting training would demand an increase of something like 40,000 in apprenticeships and learnerships. The reverse is happening: in 1958 the number entering apprenticeships declined from 95,184 to 93,212. And it is not due to lack of desire on their part. *The Times* reported in February:

> Up and down the country firms report queues of youngsters waiting for apprenticeships. . . . But the number of apprenticeships open to them is growing smaller, as industry pulls in its horns in face of recession.

In Bromley last year, the Kent Youth Employment Officer reports, 200 lads turned up for fifteen apprentice vacancies. Over a third of Cardiff youth willing to take apprenticeships were disappointed.

This is a position that demands drastic Government action. Unless the school-leaver gets an apprenticeship soon after leaving, he has had it; he is too old. Small firms, and some not so small,

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hit by the slump, break apprenticeships: and that means that the lad has lost more than a job: he has lost the chance of a skill. For, as John Foster put it: 'Unemployment at sixteen can mean deprivation of skill for a lifetime'.

But something far more than just maintaining the present unsatisfactory position is essential to meet future needs for skilled workers. The whole attitude to training and education needs changing. The Government have made the grand gesture of granting £75,000 towards increasing the number of training development officers whose job it will be to 'stimulate' the setting up of training schemes. The whole history of training in Britain shows that big business will not train skilled workers for the future if it means that some of the profits of today have to be spent. Yet even this measly £75,000 is conditional on industry providing the same amount.

Now, while it goes without saying that there is no solution to this problem outside the general anti-slump struggle of the working class, there are particular demands that need to be fought for by the Labour movement, demands that young people themselves will fight for, too. Recently, *Challenge,* the Young Communist League paper, organised a Forum on Youth Unemployment in Liverpool to which were invited trade unions, political organisations, Members of Parliament and young workers. The response was excellent and arising out of the discussion a deputation of trade unionists, and unemployed young workers, led by a J.P. went to see the mayor. A list of local demands was drawn up to form the basis of a petition sponsored by local personalities. Similar forums are taking place in other parts of the country: a nation-wide forum and lobby will take place in October. Especially heartening in Liverpool was the reception given by the lads at the Labour Exchange, many of whom had been there for months without any hope of work. The advice given them had been to leave the area: to go—where? That nobody could say.

Amongst the particular demands which the Labour movement should support are that training centres should be set up as an emergency step; *e.g.,* disused ordnance factories and Ministry of Supply depots could serve this purpose. This would ensure that all school-leavers could be accommodated until jobs were found. Training centres should be free with full grants paid to the students; time spent there should count towards any subsequent apprenticeship. Alongside this must go the insistence that there be no cuts in existing apprenticeship and trade training schemes and full

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quotas be taken. Many firms do not take apprentices, resting content to recruit their skilled labour ready trained.

A particular demand in Liverpool was that the local corporation should increase its ratio of apprentices, and this is something that Labour councils throughout the country could look to. Wages for young workers, particularly apprentices, are criminally low and should be immediately increased, with equal pay for equal work. Youth is still seen as a source of cheap labour by many firms. This constitutes a threat to every working man. Working hours for young workers should be 40 hours a week and an annual holiday of three weeks with pay.

New factories and work places should be directed to the worst affected places and loans at low interest rates granted to councils.

A difficulty about school leavers and apprenticeships is the lack of reliable statistics. Often it is not known how many are without work as they do not all register. The Carr Report made the point that nobody knows just how many apprenticeships are available; all that is known is that there is not enough. This is intolerable: some central registration is necessary. The establishment of the training centres would at least ensure that a check is kept on the school-leavers. Raising the school-leaving age to sixteen, part-time education for all up to eighteen and the extension of higher education would not only help offset the immediate problem but also raise the whole level of education in this nuclear age.

In the struggle for these demands many fundamental questions relating to apprenticeships and education will come to the fore, and not before time.

It becomes increasingly clear that neither the Tories nor big business give a damn about the plight of young people today. It is for the trade union and labour movement to fight for their future. In the process they will solve the old problem of winning youth.

YOUTH AND SKILL

'Tyneside Apprentice'

AS an apprentice on Tyneside, amongst the biggest engineering and shipbuilding districts in Britain, I want to take up a problem of 'Youth in Engineering' (April *Labour Monthly*) where John Foster left off. He pointed out how many young people are unemployed today, the difficulty he found in placing school-leavers in engineering, in getting apprenticeships for them. He referred, too, to the 'disgraceful rates' of wages of young people.

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But what are the prospects today for the lad who is already serving his time as an apprentice? In present-day Britain there are not enough skilled jobs waiting for young people who would like to go into a trade. What a position! The trade unions would like to keep the ratio of apprentices as low as possible, to ensure a good training, at one apprentice for every four journeymen, where that ratio has been established, and in any case not to be more than one in five. District committees of the Amalgamated Engineering Union have been trying to get an agreement to keep it. At present the ratio is above that. So it is a poor look-out for the young apprentice, and a dangerous position for the unions.

In my own factory there are about three apprentices to every four journeymen; but it has always been notorious for boy labour. In 1957 it opened an apprentice training school which gave you an introduction to the trade, such as the use of machines and the fitting side. But if you were not lucky enough to get a journeyman to work with you after leaving school, you travelled the same road as many lads had done before you: floating around the shop filing rough edges of jobs and tapping holes. Every six months there is a shift round of apprentices; but again the same lads who were floating before may still not get a mate to work with. Fifty per cent of the journeymen are on machines, which leaves more apprentices than journeymen on the fitting section. That is the reason why not every apprentice can work with a journeyman.

It is the same in all parts of the shop: but the erecting bay is the worst, where the engine itself is built. This is where you really see the exploitation of boy labour. Building the engine here are two chargemen, six journeymen—and twenty apprentices!

At eighteen years of age I am still an apprentice and have only worked in this one factory, so I am unable to tell from my own experience about conditions in other parts of the Tyne. But from cases that come up into the Amalgamated Engineering Union Junior Workers' Committee we see that it is not so different on all parts of the Tyne. The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Union here is trying to get the appointment of an apprentice registration officer, to keep track of all details of numbers of apprentices and ratio, training facilities and so on.

There is quite a good scheme of education. We are allowed one day a week to attend day school, and time off to go home if we attend evening classes: but there is room for improvement. For example, if you failed your exam at day school you would have to attend evening classes the next year. At the age of eighteen or nine-

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teen when you reach the higher stage of your education, there is more likelihood of failing; and at this age most lads do not want to attend evening classes. So many give up their studies altogether. Yet if they were allowed to go on at day schools, they would continue their studies, and most of them would become the technicians that will be needed in the future.

At present trade union organisation amongst apprentices on the Tyne is not very good. This is mainly due to the union not being brought to them. Once again I will have to go back to my own factory, where trade union organisation has been just about nil among the apprentices. Over the last six months we apprentices have been tackling this problem—to the best of our ability, for we do not get much support from the shop stewards. Over this period we have raided the shop with about 1,000 A.E.U. propaganda leaflets, mainly dealing with youth and the apprentices' wage claim. We have also been trying to get apprentice factory gate meetings going. Since we started the apprentice union membership has gone up and about one in five are in the union. We now have members who are acting as the nucleus in the shop on the Tyne Junior Workers' Committee. We have put resolutions through this instructing shop stewards to hold apprentice meetings and for them to fight for the apprentice wage claim and 100 per cent trade unionism.

Before we can win our wage claim we must have a national campaign to bring about a feeling among apprentices; and in the event of an unsatisfactory reply from the employers, to involve our membership in action calculated to force the employers to reconsider their decision. The time has come for us to take action. We have been putting in the apprentices' claim since 1953, and we are no nearer to it now than we were then. We apprentices are ready to fight. All we need is the leadership from the shop stewards and union officials in organising apprentices.

John Foster quoted only a few lines from the speech which Tom Mann made to young union members in 1921. He also said:

> It is the quality of youth to be receptive, to be warm-hearted, to glow with enthusiasm; and it is well that it should be so. If taunted about the youth, don't worry. The future of the world belongs to the youth of the world, and it is from the young and not the old that the fire of life will warm and enlighten the world. It is your privilege to breathe the breath of life into the dry bones of many around you. It is a sacred task, go forth and achieve.

Given the help we need, we young people will bring true Tom Mann's words.

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BOOK

World Without War

J. D. Bernal

Routledge & Kegan Paul. 25s. 320pp.

FOR nearly thirty years now Professor Bernal, patiently, but with great persistence, has striven to develop among scientists, as among wider circles of the people of many countries, an understanding of the great transformation of human society to an immeasurably higher form that would be possible if the full potentialities of scientific discovery and technique were devoted to the welfare of mankind. Through his personal example and his writings he has done more, perhaps, than any other living scientist to foster a social consciousness amongst them. The growth of a sense of responsibility for the way their discoveries are applied, which has been a marked feature of post-war science, owes much to the influence of his ideas as expressed in his monumental work *The Social Function of Science.*

The appearance of a new work developing the same theme, but in the context of the markedly changed world of 1959, is therefore an event of importance. In *World Without War* Bernal defines his aim as 'to show enough of the possibilities and the visions of the future to attract people and at the same time to give them an idea of the practical steps necessary to realise them'. Of course the practical steps required to achieve the enormous potentialities inherent in the full application of modern science are the end of the arms race, the liquidation of the cold war and building relations between peoples and their governments on a basis of trust and co-operation. 'The catastrophic character of nuclear warfare is the absolutely new factor in human history'. Unless this is recognised and reflected in foreign policies, there is no sense in speculating on a world without war. The development of western doctrines on war—the decision to base all our strategy on the nuclear deterrent and our tactics on the use of smaller scale nuclear weapons—makes it unlikely that mankind can continue to support the present standard of life over a long period, unless there is some basic change in the relation between states. At worst these policies will lead to a nuclear war from which, if mankind survives at all, he may well be put back hundreds of years by the destruction of the bases of civilisation, built up laboriously over past centuries. At best they will lead to a widespread deterioration in health through continued testing of nuclear weapons, and to serious impoverishment by vast resources being squandered on military expenditure. Thus Bernal estimates that since 1950 some 90,000 million dollars have been spent every year on military preparations and on the development of weapons that are often obsolete before they are issued to the armed forces.

If we are able to solve this problem of the elimination of war, how then can science be applied most effectively? Bernal shows the enormous changes that could be made with the application of available scientific knowledge to further aspects of our modern life. He draws attention to the wastefulness of production, the appalling inefficiency of fuel utilisation, the squandering of natural resources, both mineral and agricultural, the waste of time and wealth through failure to plan transport facilities rationally. Many of these deficiencies are inherent in the organisation

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of our society: but even within the framework of a capitalist social order they could be alleviated. For the immediate future he dwells on the implications of the coming era of cheap and plentiful energy and of automation. Striking developments appear likely in the use of marginal lands for agriculture; the widespread mechanisation of the farm; the more efficient utilisation of sea food, including the processing of plankton for animal food; and even the development of micro-biological food production from algae, by photosynthesis, using light produced from atomic energy. However, the scientific age into which, in the absence of war, the world will pass, will require a much better educated population, with a greater knowledge of science and technique; and the number of highly trained specialists required will rise accordingly. Tremendous efforts will be needed in Britain particularly to provide such a large number of specialists: only 2 per cent of our young people in the age group 18-24 are at present studying science and engineering in universities or technical colleges; the corresponding figure in the U.S.S.R. is 10 per cent.

Of special urgency is the problem of industrialisation of underdeveloped countries. The tremendous unevenness of economic development throughout the world, whereby the average income of an American is ten times that of the average for the whole world and one hundred times that of the average Indian, is a tragic aftermath of the era of colonial exploitation. Yet neither for peoples of the former colonial countries nor of the most advanced industrial nations is it pertinent to speculate about the widest application of scientific technique unless we can achieve a change in international relations, and ease the tensions that have divided the world into two armed camps.

This book is an indispensable source book for fighters for peace. Well documented, illustrated with diagrams and tables and a good index, it can play a vital role in the great struggle of our time.

E. H. S. BURHOP.

WILLIAM MORRIS AND IBSEN

The respectable critics have been very much down on Ibsen's play of *A Doll's House*, now being acted at the Novelty Theatre, and profess to be shocked. . . . I note the critics say that Ibsen's plays are pessimistic; so they are—to pessimists; and all intelligent persons who are not Socialists are pessimists. But the representation of the corruption of society carries with it in Ibsen's works aspirations for a better state of things, and that is not pessimism. Therefore Socialists recognise in them another token of the new dawn.

William Morris, in *Commonweal*,
June 22, 1889.

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(Continued from page ii of cover)

ning in this direction is the remarkable *Fight Back* series which has been appearing in *Labour Monthly* since February from pit, workshop and depot. What a variety of contributors from a young Tyneside apprentice to battle-steeled trade unionists in engineering, rails and mining. What vivid pictures they bring to mind, like the fight to save the Devon pit (a pencil drawing of which hangs on our wall). Many Londoners must have noticed this name in the centre of the Clackmannan county banner, which was one of those carried on the historic march and lobby when the Scots miners came to town.

But the importance of this Fight-Back is not confined to workshops, or 'workshop issues'. To succeed against slump today it will be found essential to prevent the Tory Government thrusting on to the people the burden of their war-distorted crazy economy, by taking from their hands the very H-bomb they need to protect it. It is against the advance of the British people not least that they and their American masters cling to H-bomb and Lie Drug alike. So the problems of fighting slump and for peace today cannot be in water-tight compartments. Hence the significance in this same number of the articles by Nora Jeffery and Joan Maynard, J.P., discussing the next steps for the peace movement.

With all that is in the balance this 'springtime of mankind', I believe we cannot overestimate the value of getting this number *quickly* into new hands; and I appeal to all readers to turn at once to our Campaign Page (p. 280); to consider carefully, and discuss with others, and in each organisation how to use this current number to the full. And, as a start, why not carry this copy with you to every meeting and demonstration you attend this month? I think we shall then find ourselves busy dealing with a flood of re-orders. We shall not complain! To compaign costs money: in fares, stationery and postage. We are ready to circularise organisations to help make more widely known articles like these, because we can rely on readers' support when it comes up in their case. But to send one specimen copy with a covering letter costs 6d. in stamps. So a campaign to win new readers must go hand in hand with extra fund support. The average fund total for the first quarter, 1959, is higher than since 1952. But costs are much higher. If we are to support fully readers' efforts we need a total nearer £100 than £50.

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